The Dreadful GUILT of

BRIBERY,

Seconded by

PERJURY:

In a Serious ADDRESS to the CONSCIENCES of all Persons who have VOTES in Counties, Cities, Corporations, and Burroughs; and of all RETURNING OFFICERS, at the ensuing ELECTIONS of MEMBERS to serve in PARLIAMENT.

In whose Hands is Mischief; and their Right-hand is full of Bribes. Psal. xxvi. 10.

Fire shall consume the Tabernacles of Bribery. Job xv. 34.

Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain: For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain. Exod. xx. 7.

The Law is for Liars, and for perjured Persons. 1 Tim. i. 9, 10.

What is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Matth. xvi. 26.

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AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

VOTERS, and RETURNING-OFFICERS at the ensuing ELECTIONS, *&c.*

Dear Friends, Countrymen, Fellow-Englishmen, *and Fellow-Christians,*

IT cannot be imagined, that any considering Person should, even as to *Temporal* Regards, be careless and unconcerned about the Issue of the ensuing Elections: When the very Being of our Constitution probably depends upon them; and the Question seems to be, Whether we shall, or shall not, be any more a free People.

But *That* is, the least of my Design in This my Address to you. 'Tis your *Souls*, more than your Liberties and Properties, which I am now persuading you to take care of. If you like such Representatives, as will govern you by Standing Armies, and perhaps make Themselves a perpetual Standing Parliament; load you with insupportable Taxes; destroy your Trade; harrass you with fresh Excises upon Excises; in short, enslave, beggar,

and undo you; by all Means chuſe ſuch Men to *be* your Repreſentatives. But do not chuſe them, I intreat you do not, upon the Foot of *Bribery* and *Perjury*; becauſe That is making yourſelves miſerable in the *next* World, for making yourſelves miſerable in *this*: Which is too much in all Reaſon.

It will be ſaid, I know, that I am writing only to ſerve a *Party*. I am, I confeſs, if to be a *Chriſtian* is to be of a Party; or if *all your Souls* are a Party. And indeed, conſidering the monſtrous Growth of Infidelity, and all Manner of Wickedneſs, I could wiſh, that, before we chuſe *Parliament-Men*, we might come to a *fair Poll* for, and againſt, the *Chriſtian Religion*: I hope it is not yet ſo bad with us, but that We Believers have a reaſonable Proſpect of *carrying it* for *Jeſus Chriſt* by a very great Majority. Suppoſe me to be a Whig, or a Tory, (if you muſt keep up That ſenſeleſs Diſtinction, 'till you are *quite* ruined by it) ſuppoſe me to be a Layman, or a Clergyman, a Churchman, or a Diſſenter; I apply to you under no Name, or Character, but That of a *Chriſtian*: Only obſerving once for all, that in That Character I include Morality, and heathen Honeſty, with the Addition of ſomething more. Which I mention; becauſe our modern Heathens, Apoſtates from Chriſtianity, are ſuch Heathens, as the antient

antient ones, the old moral Pagans, who never were Christians, would, if they were now living, disown and abhor. But This by the Way, at present; tho' a little more of it perhaps hereafter.

Whatever Party I am of; will a Man of *any* Party tell you, it is fit and reasonable, that you should incur *Damnation* by *serving him* in his *Election*? I desire that no Man of the Party I am of (whatever it be) may be served by such Means; that is, by *Bribery* and *Perjury*; that is, again, by the Ruin of *his* Soul, who gives him, or rather sells him, his Vote. And This brings me to the Point in which I am directly engaged.

By a late Act of Parliament, to prevent *Bribery* and *Corruption* in These Elections, every *Voter* takes an *Oath*, that he has not received any *Gift*, *Place*, or *Promise*, *directly or indirectly*, for his *Vote*; and every *Returning Officer* takes an Oath, that he has received none for making any *Return*. That such Oaths must be taken, is well known to the whole Kingdom. Certainly then, *there's an End of Bribery* in These *Elections*: Which-ever Side prevails, the Court Party, or the Country Party, it cannot be by the Influence of *That*. For who can bribe, when no body is bribed? And beyond all Question, *no body is* bribed, when *every*

body

body swears he is *not*. This, one would think, should be very obvious, and rational Arguing: And yet, we are told, it is given out, by certain Persons, with great Confidence, and made Matter of no small Boasting, that *Bribery* will be as operative at these *next* Elections, as ever it has been at *any*; and that the whole Point will be carried by it. Sure I don't understand you, I should be apt to say to One who should talk in this fashion. Can these *corrupt Methods* be as successful, now there is an *Oath* to prevent them, as they were *before* there was any such Thing? Nay, can they be successful *at all*? or in *one* single Instance? Yes, there are so many People to be *governed by Money*, especially in the *little Burroughs*: Those Burroughs, all the World knows, are perfectly venal, and set to Sale at every Election.—— Ay, but the *Oath*, say I; you take no Notice of *That*; and That's the main Thing of all. There was *formerly* too much Truth in what you tell me: *Then*, indeed, People took Money for their Voices; especially in the *Burroughs* you mention; and That, God knows, was bad enough: However, tho' they were *bribed*, they were not *forsworn*; because there was no *Oath* in the Case. But will they do so *now* too, when there *is* an Oath? Will any Man, in any one of

those

thoſe *Burroughs*, or any where elſe, be *bribed* for his *Vote*; when he *cannot vote*, without *ſwearing* that he is *not* bribed? *Returns* have been *formerly* made under the ſame *corrupt Influence*, when there was *no Oath*; but is not the Caſe altered *now*? Will any *Officer* make his *Return* an Act of the *blackeſt Perjury*?--Well, Sir, notwithſtanding all your Interrogatories, and Exclamations, the Oath will ſignify nothing, or next to nothing: We ſhall do our Buſineſs, for all *that*: Some few, perhaps, may be bug-bear'd by it; but, in the main, Elections will go as *we* would have them: *We* ſhall have a *great* Majority, or at leaſt *a* Majority; and That's enough for our Purpoſe—— And is it ſo then indeed? Vicious and debauched as the Age is, I would fain have a better Opinion of my Country than This comes to; nay, 'till I ſee plain Fact to convince me of the Contrary, I will, and muſt, hope and believe better. Thoſe who raiſe ſuch Reports, throw a Scandal upon their Countrymen, which ought to be reſented by them with the utmoſt Indignation. The *Engliſh* Nation was always looked upon as a *ſerious*, *thinking*, and *religious* People. Its *Genius*, I confeſs, has been *pretty much altered*, within theſe Twenty Years, or thereabouts. But I hope we are not come

to

to *This* yet. What! Are we no longer Christians? No longer *Englishmen*? No longer Men? Why, a moral Heathen, (a moral one, did I say? a very immoral one, unless abandoned to the most profligate Impudence) would be startled at the bare Mention of such an Abomination. By the Way, if there are so many among the *Common People* who will thus *perjure themselves*; pray, what are we to think of Those their *Superiors*, who *make* them do it? Are they not *guilty* of the *Perjury*, tho' they do not *swear*? As He who *gives* a *Bribe*, is no less guilty than He who *takes* it; so He who *makes* another Man *forsworn is no* less guilty than He who *is* forsworn.—— Come, all This signifies nothing; the Thing will be done.——It may be so: And if it be; I have nothing to reply, but, *Hear, O Heavens, and give Ear, O Earth**——— and to add, in the Words of another noble Prophet: *Shall not God visit for these Things? And shall not his Soul be avenged on such a Nation as This?* †

By an Act of Parliament, made in the 2d Year of his present Majesty K. *George* II. Intituled, *An Act for the more effectual preventing Bribery and Corruption, in the Elections of Members to serve in Parliament*:

'Every

* Isaiah i. 2. † Jer. v. 29.

'Every Free-holder, Citizen, Freeman, 'Burgeſs, or Perſon having, or claiming 'to have, Right to vote, or be polled at 'ſuch Election, ſhall, before he is admitted 'to poll at the ſame Election, take the 'following Oath: That is to ſay,

'I *A. B.* do ſwear (or, being one of the 'People called *Quakers*, I *A. B.* do 'ſolemnly affirm) I have not received or 'had, by Myſelf, or any Perſon whatſo-'ever, in Truſt for me, or for my Uſe 'and Benefit, directly, or indirectly, any 'Sum or Sums of Money, Office, Place, or 'Employment, Gift, or Reward, or any 'Promiſe, or Security, for any Money, 'Office, Employment, or Gift, in order 'to give my Vote at this Election; and 'that I have not before been polled at this 'Election.

'And that every Sheriff, Mayor, Bay-'liff, Headborough, or other Perſon, being 'the Returning Officer, ſhall, immediately 'after the Reading the Writ or Precept for 'the Election of ſuch Member, take, and 'ſubſcribe the following Oath:

'I *A. B.* do ſolemnly ſwear, that I have 'not directly, nor indirectly, received 'any Sum or Sums of Money, Office,

‘ Place, or Employment, Gratuity, or Re-
‘ ward, or any Bond, Bill, or Note, or
‘ any Promiſe, or Gratuity whatſoever,
‘ either by Myſelf, or any other Perſon, to
‘ my Uſe, or Benefit, or Advantage, for
‘ making any Return at the preſent Elec-
‘ tion of Members to ſerve in Parliament;
‘ and that I will return ſuch Perſon or
‘ Perſons, as ſhall, to the beſt of my
‘ Judgment, appear to me to have the
‘ Majority of legal Votes.”

Now can any *Voter* come up to the *Book*, to take the above-recited Oath, with a *Bribe* from One of the Candidates *in his Pocket*? Or *having received* a Bribe, *wherever* it is *lodged*? Or having the *Promiſe* of one, or any Thing like it, by *Himſelf*, or *Another*, *directly*, or *indirectly*? Can he, I ſay, *come up* to the *Book*, and *lay his Hand* upon it; and will he not *tremble*, and *turn pale*? Will not his *Blood run cold* in his Veins? Will not *the Joints of his Loins be looſed, and his Knees ſmite againſt one another* *, as *Belſhazzar*'s did at the Sight of the *Hand-Writing upon the Wall*? For This Man, when he ſees That *Hand-Writing*, the *Oath*, ſpred before him, ſees his *Deſtruction*, as he by his Wickedneſs has made it, no leſs than *Belſhazzar* did His. Then he comes to repeat the Words, “ I *A. B.*

* Dan. v. 6.

“ *do*

" *do ſwear*, &c." Swear *what*? Why, That I have *not* done, what I *know* I *have* done; that is, I *call God*, in the moſt *ſolemn* and *ſacred* Manner, to *witneſs* the *Lye* which I am juſt now going to utter. Will not the *Tongue* of ſuch a Man *cleave to the Roof of his Mouth*? Will he not ſhudder at the Apprehenſion of being ſtruck dead upon the Spot? Or of having the Tongue, which ſpeaks the Perjury, ſwell in his Head; or the Hand, which touches the *Book*, rot off? Nothing of That Nature indeed is like to happen. God does not owe a wicked People ſo much Favour, as to terrify them into their Duty by immediate and extraordinary Judgments. *If they believe not* Moſes *and the Prophets*, Chriſt, and his Apoſtles; *neither will they be perſuaded, tho' one roſe from the Dead** ; or were ſent thither by Fire from Heaven. Preſent, ſudden, *temporal Death* will probably be inflicted upon few, or none, as a Puniſhment of the *Perjury*; but let all, who have the leaſt Inclination to be guilty of it, tremble at the Thoughts of *eternal Death*, which is infinitely worſe. Then what ſhall we ſay of the *forſworn Wretch*, when he comes to *ſeal his Damnation* by *kiſſing the divine Goſpels*; as the *Arch-Traytor* did *his* by *kiſſing* the *divine Author* of them? Let it be here obſerv'd, in paſſing, that *Judas*, who

* Luke xvi. 31.

betrayed his Saviour, was *himself betrayed* into *That Treachery* by being BRIBED.

Some may perhaps flatter themselves, that the Oath will be taken in a *Hurry*, and a *Crowd*; so many Hands will be upon the *Book* at once; the Court will be so thronged, that no body will discern their guilty Faces; and the *Words* (for Dispatch) repeated *so fast*, that few will hear them; nay, it will be easy for many to *avoid speaking the Words* at all; or to avoid *touching* the *Book*, or *kissing* the *Book*; and so all is safe, because they have not *really taken* the Oath. Some will come *half drunk*; Others, it may be, *quite* so: And then again they will drink to *wash down the Oath*; as I am told Some have profanely expressed themselves upon another Occasion. But is This a *Lessening* of the *Guilt*? Is it not a *high* and *inflaming Aggravation* of it? I will not put so great an Affront upon the *common Sense*, much less the *good Sense*, of my Countrymen and Fellow-Christians, as to answer this Talk by a formal Confutation. I only observe, as to one or two Parts of it, that if *Men* cannot discern your *Faces*, *God* discerns your *Hearts*. And for Those who flatter themselves, that they do not *really take* the Oath, because they do not *speak the Words*, *touch*, or *kiss* the *Book*, and the like; This is so *infamous a Prevarication*, both with God and

and Man, that it is (if possible) even *worse Perjury*, than what they allow to be so. They *come* to *swear*; they are by Every body *thought* to *swear*; they *desire* to be *thought* to *swear*, for otherwise they could not *vote*: But by this *hypocritical Jumble* of *Swearing* and *Not swearing*, they *doubly forswear* themselves, and are of all Miscreants the vilest. I hope there will be found no such *Popish Protestants*, or *Protestant Papists* among the *good People* of *England*.

What has been said of the *Voters* may be applied to the *Returning-Officer*; and something *more*: Because more depends upon *His* Behaviour, than upon any other single Person's. And to make the Oath (if That can be) more solemn, He *subscribes* it, as well as *takes* it. Can He then *swear* that He has *not* received any Gift, Place, Gratuity, or Promise whatsoever, for making his Return, when he *knows* he *has*? That is the *Assertory* Part of his Oath; the Other is *Promissory*. He swears that *he will return such Person, or Persons, as shall, to the best of his Judgment, appear to Him to have the Majority of legal Votes*. Well then: Does he *keep* This Oath; does he not most *scandalously* and *impiously forswear himself*, if he returns One, who, He *knows*, or even *believes*, has *not* a Majority of legal Votes?

And

And this too, tho' he has received *no* Gift, Gratuity, or Promise; but is only *byassed*, and *prejudiced* by *Partiality* to his *Party*; or *any Way influenced* by the *Candidate*, or by any *Lord*, *Spiritual*, or *Temporal*; who cannot, without a high Breach of the Privileges of the Commons of *England*, at all intermeddle in These Elections?

But to consider the *Voters*, and the *Returning-Officer*, in Conjunction, and as equally concerned. Some *Perjuries* may *seem* at least to be *softened* by *Circumstances*; as that the *Matter* may be *difficult*, *doubtful*, and *obscure*; the *Facts* at *a Distance*, done *long since*, &c. and yet the Person may be sufficiently forsworn. But to take a *false Oath* about the *plainest Fact*; to swear that I have *not* done what I JUST NOW *have* done; or that I *will not* do what I am resolved, and JUST NOW *going to* do; when I know that the *Oath I am taking* was MADE ON PURPOSE TO PREVENT *That very Thing* which I have JUST NOW *done*, or am JUST NOW *going* to do; to come in *cold Blood*, and with *deliberate Thought*, to give my Voice for such or such a Man, when I *know* I *cannot* give it without being PERJURED in the most detestable Manner———What *Heart* is *hard* enough to endure the Thoughts of This before *God*? What *Forehead* so *steeled*, or *brazened* with *Impudence*, as to look any *Man* in

in the Face, while he is doing it, or after he has done it; tho' he is ſenſible that No one can be conſcious of it, but *God*, his *Briber*, and *Himſelf*?

Bribery, in *itſelf*, or in *its own Nature*, is one of the *fouleſt* and *baſeſt Crimes* that can be committed; as well as the moſt *pernicious* in its *Conſequences* to any Kingdom, or Common-wealth. Nothing can be more *infamous* than He that takes a Bribe; unleſs it be He that gives one. No Man of *Honour*, or even of *common Honeſty*, can be capable of *either*. However ſlightly it may be thought of by Some who *call themſelves Chriſtians*, and by Others, who, though *chriſtened*, glory in *not being Chriſtians*; it was ever held in the utmoſt Abhorrence by the *ancient moral Heathen*. And if the very *Pagan* Moraliſts condemned it; we may be ſure, the holy Scriptures do. 'The Prophet *Iſaiah* (ſays the excellent Bp. '*Sanderſon* *) ſpeaking of an *upright juſt* '*Man*, deſcribeth him among other Things, 'by this, that *he ſhaketh his Hands from* '*holding Bribes*: *Iſaiah* xxxiii. 15. As a 'Man would ſhake off a *Viper*, or other 'venemous Beaſt, that ſhould offer to 'faſten upon his Hand; as St. *Paul* did 'at *Malta*.' The Expreſſion is beautiful and elegant; and any ſerious Conſiderer muſt be deeply affected by it. This Practice

* Sermons p. 647, 648.

is

is likewise forbidden: *Exod.* xxiii. 8. *Deut.* xvi 19. And the Reason given is, that it *blinds the Eyes*; i. e. corrupts and darkens the Understanding, or Judgment. That by a *Gift* (as it is rendered in our *English* Translation) is meant a *Bribe*, in both those Places, according to the same Translation, appears from That parallel one: 1 *Sam.* xii. 3. *Of whose Hands have I received a Bribe to blind mine Eyes therewith?* And it is taxed by the Prophet *Amos*, as a Sin of a very high Nature, *a mighty Sin*; Chap. v. 12. *I know your manifold Transgressions, and your mighty Sins; They afflict the Just, They take a Bribe*, &c.

You will say, it may be, that all This relates only to *Judges*, and Persons concerned in Courts of *Judicature*: But if you do, you deceive yourselves. The Texts cited from the *two Prophets* speak of Bribery indefinitely, and in general Terms. And tho' in *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy* Judges only are *mentioned*; yet Others are not therefore *excluded*. And if the *Reason* of the Prohibition holds with respect to Others, They must needs be affected by it. Now I ask you, does not a Bribe *blind your Eyes* in voting for Parliament Men, as much as it does a Judge's upon the Bench, or a Juryman's at the Bar? I appeal to your *own Consciences*. When You vote for

for a Man who has bribed you, do you not vote for him *because* he has bribed you? Though You do, and must know, if You have but the Gift of Common Sense, that he is *not fit* to be a *Member of Parliament* for *That very Reason*. And is not This having your *Eyes blinded*? Do You not, for the Sake of the Bribe, *wilfully shut them*; and labour *not* to see What you really *do* see? Did You never hear of That well known Saying, 'Those who *buy* their '*Seats* in the House of Commons, must '*sell* their *Votes* There?' Or whether You have Before heard of it, or no; do you not Now from your Hearts believe it to be *True*? Does not He, who in Parliament votes by the Influence of *Money*, betray *His* Trust? And therefore do not You, who by the Influence of *Money* send him Thither, betray *Yours*? And is there *no Sin* in all This? Is it not the *Height* of *Wickedness*? He that *bribes* will Himself *be bribed*; Nay he bribes *in order* to be bribed! And so all runs round in a Circle of *Bribing*, and *Being bribed*; 'till this *Iniquity* is, in Effect, *established by a Law*, and the *Destruction* of the Nation *compleated*.

The Words *Bribery*, and *Corruption* are, both in antient, and modern, Languages, coupled together, or signify the same. Our wise Legislature speaks That Language in

the *very Act* which is the Subject of my present Address to you. And why? Because *Bribery corrupts* and *debauches* Those, both *Givers*, and *Receivers*, who are concerned in it; and is, in a Manner, *all Vice*, and *Villany* in little. I once more appeal to Yourselves, Whether you do not think, that the prodigious Extravagance and Luxury, Debauchery and Profaneness, Falshood and Fraud, and the almost Extinction of Morality, and Modesty among us, be owing to any Thing so much, as to This single *Corruption* of *Bribery*? If That can be called a single one, which includes almost all others.

Thus for *Bribery* as it is in *itself*, and in its *immediate*, *unavoidable Consequences*. But what shall we say of it; when it is *backed* and *seconded* by *Perjury*? Good God! What shall we say of it indeed? For my own Part, I want Words to express my Thoughts upon so *direful*, and *tremendous* a Subject. An *Oath* was ever, in all Ages, in all Nations, Heathen, as well as Jewish, and Christian, deemed a *Religious* Act; even one of the *highest*, most *solemn*, and *sacred* Parts of *Religion*. *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt* SWEAR BY HIS NAME; says God himself by his great Prophet *Moses*, Deut. vi. 13. x. 20. To which You would do well to add another Text in

the

the ſame Book; Chap. xxviii. *Ver.* 58. *That thou mayeſt fear this glorious and fearful Name*, THE LORD, THY GOD; conſequently, not *take that fearful Name in vain*, in the worſt Senſe, by *perjuring*, or *forſwearing* yourſelves. You ſee the *Fear*, and *Service of God*, which includes all Religion, is joined with *Swearing by Him*. And the moſt learned and judicious *Bp. Sanderſon*, before cited, gives This as the very *Definition* of an *Oath*; That it is * 'a *Religious Act*, 'by which God is invoked as a Witneſs to 'confirm a doubtful Matter.' In the Caſe now before us, the *doubtful* Matter is, Whether the Man has taken Money for his Vote, or no. To reduce This *Doubt* to *Certainty*, he *ſwears* he has *Not*; that is, he calls God, the *Searcher of Hearts*, to *witneſs* that he has Not. If, notwithſtanding This, he *has* taken Money for his Vote, he makes That as *certain* as it *can be*, with Relation to *other Men*, which indeed is ſo far from being *certain*, that it is *utterly falſe*. Thus he *deceives Men*, and *mocks God*; in the higheſt Degree profanes the Name of God; as much as in him lies, eludes and defeats the whole *Deſign* of an *Oath*; and commits one of the moſt heinous Sins that can be conceived or imagined. If an *Oath*

 will

* Juramentum eſt *Actus religioſus*, quo ad confirmandam rem dubiam Deus teſtis invocatur. *De Juramenti Obligatione*, Prælect. i. p. 3.

will not bind us, *Nothing* will: The Bands of human Society, and the most sacred Ties between God and Man, are dissolved.

Among Christians there is, indeed, *one*, and but one, *Act of Religion*, which may be thought more solemn and sacred than an Oath: I say, may be thought; for I question whether it be, or no. However, the very Word *Sacrament*, in the Language from which we took it, signifies an *Oath*; Which may teach us what a Notion the Christian World has, and ever had, of the *Religion of an Oath*. Should a Man, after having *sealed his Lye* with *Perjury*, *seal his Perjury*, by *taking the Sacrament* upon it; he would only *increase* his Guilt, not *make* it: For the *Perjury itself* is the *Ruin of his Soul*; and That surely is more than sufficient.

But, as *Infidelity* abounds among us; You will be told by some Men, that I have been all this while proceeding upon a wrong Principle; meaning, upon Supposition That there *is a God*: That the *Christian Religion is true*; and that there are such Things as the *Divine Vengeance*, and *Future Punishment*. I have, indeed, argued upon That Supposition, but not upon a false Principle; for the Supposition is most infallibly *true*. You do not, I hope, expect, that I should, in a short

Letter,

Letter, written upon a *particular Occasion*, prove to you Those *general Points*, the *Being of God*, and the *Truth of Christianity*. That has been done a thousand times over; and of late, in many unanswerable Treaties, to which I refer you: In which it is demonstrated, not only that the Facts urg'd as Proofs of Christianity are *true*, but that 'tis *impossible they should be false*: And the wretched Cavils of our modern Infidels are exposed to the Scorn and Contempt of all rational Creatures. I will only, in a Word or two, suggest a few Things to your Thoughts. If we cannot be assured of *These Facts*, we can be assured of *None* which we did not see; a Paradox so prodigious, that no body in his Wits will affirm it. Nay, if Those Facts *were* false, 'tis impossible for any body at this time of Day to *prove* them so. I might well take it higher; and ask what Madness is it to think of proving *plain Matters of Fact* to be *false*, which *all Mankind*, Enemies as well as Friends, have, for 1700 Years, allowed to be *true*? Then again, which is nearly a-kin to the former Observation, these Men will perhaps tell you, that there is *no future State* after *Death*: But can they *prove* it? No; 'tis impossible they should, even if there *were none*. Ours therefore is the *safer Side*, to put it at the

lowest:

lowest: And I think I have put it *very low*; since it has been over and over *proved to a Demonstration*, that there *is* such a State.

Consider, I beseech you, what an Opinion You ought to have of Those Men, who, in order to destroy your *Liberties* and *Properties*, take *so much Pains* to destroy *your Souls*. I mean, *if there are* such Men: And whether there are, or no, let the Nation judge.

Sure I am, because it is visible in Books printed, and carefully dispersed, there is much wicked Industry used, to set People *loose* from all Regards to *God* and *Religion*, to *common Honesty*, and *common Shame*. Whether Those Principles are not encouraged by the *very same Men*, who labour to *corrupt you* with *Bribery* and *Perjury*; and whether the *One* be not *in order* to the *Other*, I leave you, and every body else, to consider. In Fact, the *Impudence* of *Vice* and *Corruption* is over-bearing, and uncontrouled: And what will be the *End* of These Things *God* only *knows*; tho' a *Man* of no great Sagacity may easily *conjecture*.

Those who would *corrupt* You, will, it may be, *Sneer* at all This; and tell you You are Fools if you believe one Word of it. But is there any *Argument* in a *Giggle*, or

or a *Grin*? It is possible they may *laugh* You out of your *Religion*; but they can't *laugh you out of Hell*, when they have *brought you Thither*.

Will they be able to *laugh* you into *Peace*, and *Quiet of Mind*; when You come to lie upon your *Death-beds*? Will they *then* be able to BRIBE That *Witness* and *Judge* in Your *own Breasts*, your *Conscience*? When *Death*, with its ghastly Visage, stares You in the Face; and *Hell* opens its Jaws to receive you?

O, but You will *repent*, before you come to *die*. Are you sure of *That*? May you not die within a Year, a Month, a Week, a Day, after You have been guilty of the Bribery, and Perjury? Or, if You should live never so long after it; do you consider what it *is* to Repent? 'Tis not merely being sorry for it, confessing, begging Pardon, and repeating the Name of *Jesus Christ*, that will do the Business. Without *God's Grace* there is no *true* Repentance. And how can You expect *That*; when You *Sinned* upon *Presumption* that You should *have* That Grace; sinned with a *presumptuous Design* of *Repenting*; which is the *highest*, and most *provoking Aggravation* of Guilt that can well be imagined? Besides; it is agreed among Divines, and Moralists (and your own Reason will tell you the same) that with reference

ference to Acts of Injustice, there can be *no* Repentance without *Restitution*, if it be in the Man's Power to make it: If not, there can be no *such* Repentance as he can be assured is *true*; and will be *accepted*. And what Restitution, what Satisfaction, or Reparation, can you make to your injured Country, for the Mischief you have done it; after you have spent the Bribe in Riot and Vice; or even in the necessary Provision for Yourselves and Families?

This Last puts me in mind of a Thought with which many of You may be apt to flatter yourselves. What's *the Publick* to *Me*? says a *poor* Voter, especially in the *little Burroughs*; I must look to *Myself* in the first Place: Let Those that are *rich* take Care of the *Nation*: I want to *maintain* Myself and Family. Here I shall have 10, 20, 50, perhaps 100 *l.* for my Vote; when I am not worth 100 Shillings in the World. Tho' all This Reasoning is quite wrong; and every Man, even the meanest, ought not, for his own private Advantage, to injure the Publick; yet waving That, and considering the Bribery and Perjury only, will you then be *damned* for this *hundred Pounds*, or whatever the *Sum* be, tho' you never so much *want* it for Yourself, and Family? Suppose there were no Danger of Death in it, would You *steal* a hundred Pounds? Would You

break

break open a House, or *rob upon the High-way* for it? Why, *Bribery* is as *bad* as *most Sorts* of *Robbery*, and *Perjury worse* than *any*. I mean *This* Bribery, and *This* Perjury at least. Nay *This Bribery* is *itself* one Sort of *Robbery*. The Publick is robbed by it; For the Publick must pay it at last.

Those who in the main are convinced by what I have said (as Every body must be who has not lost his Reason) and yet have a mighty mind to be fingering the Money offered at the approaching Elections, can have no Resource, but to flatter, and deceive themselves by *Shifts*, and *Evasions*; and endeavour to persuade their poor Souls that they are *not* bribed, and consequently *not* forsworn, when they really *are*. One says, He has a Place, Office, or Employment *already*: And tho' he is threatened to be turned out of it, if he does not vote as he is directed; yet he *takes* nothing, but only *keeps* what he had Before. But is not This gross Prevarication? What is Keeping a Place, but the *Continuation* of Taking it? And is he not as much influenced in his Vote by keeping an old Place, as by taking a new one? If he expects to escape the Punishment due to the Crimes of which I am speaking; he must throw up his Place, rather than keep it upon such a Condition. Thus, He

 will

will ſay, is very hard; It will ruin Him, and his Family. It is very hard, I confeſs; And let Thoſe anſwer for it, who put That Hardſhip upon him. However; the Loſs of his *Soul* is much worſe than the Loſs of his *Livelihood.*

'Tis not for *Myſelf*, ſays Another; 'Tis for my Father, my Son, my Brother, my Couſin —— *He* has, or is to have, the Place, or the Office, or the Penſion, not *I.* But if You vote upon ſuch a Conſideration for *Another*; is not That doing it *indirectly* for *Yourſelf*? A Man cannot do a Thing for Another, without doing it, tho' not immediately, yet mediately and indirectly, for Himſelf; For all reſolves into *Himſelf*, in the laſt Reſort. In This Caſe he is plainly *byaſſed*, *prejudiced*, *prevailed with*, by a *Gift*, in diſpoſing of his *Vote*; and by *perſonal Motives* manifeſtly *contrary* to the *Deſign*, and *Intention* of the *Oath.*

A Third ſays, He has *received no* Reward, or Gift for his Vote; and *intends* to receive none. His Landlord, 'tis true, has given him ſtrong Hints that he will abate of his Rent, or favour him in his next Leaſe: But This is not Bribery. I ask You; Do you not *vote* upon ſuch *Hopes*? Upon ſuch a *Proſpect*? If You do; is not This *indirect Bribery*? And if it be, is not Your taking

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the Oath *direct Perjury*? For is not the Word *indirectly*, as well as *directly*, in the Oath?

Such a Gentleman, says Another, sent me indeed a very *handsome Present*; but I did not *promise* to poll for him upon *That Account*; Nay, He himself did not say a Word about it. 'Tis true, I intend to give him my Vote; But 'tis not upon the Score of That Present; but because he is an honest Gentleman. And is he ever the less honest to his Country, for being kind to Me? I would have served him at his Election; whether he had sent me that Present, or no. And how then am I bribed? To all This I answer; 'Tis Nothing but the Sophistry of the Devil, and of your own deceitful Heart: Or, if you please, your own laboured *Self-delusion*. Examine your own Conscience *throughly*; and I desire no better Evidence. Tho' He *said* nothing to you about *Voting*; Do You *think* He would have sent You *That Present*, if You *had not had a Vote* at his Election? Do you not *know* he would *Not*? Is not This therefore *indirect Bribery*? And does not your Conscience tell You that for *That very Reason* You ought *not* to vote for him? The execrable Practise of *Bribing*, and *being bribed*, under Pretence of *laying Wagers*; giving and receiving 100*l.* *for a*

Horse that is not worth 5 *l.* 150 *l.* for a *Cow, and Calf*, &c. and then taking the Oath, is such *impious*, and *profane Mockery*, as is enough to draw down the immediate Vengeance of Heaven. 'Tis *making a Jest* of *Hell-Fire*, and *playing* with *Damnation.*

Other Cases of This Nature, that is of *indirect* Bribery, might be mentioned: But These which I have named are sufficient to give You a clear Notion of them all. The infamous and knavish Practice of *splitting* Freeholds, and other Tenures, is a Matter of somewhat different Consideration; and so I pass it over. I will only add that These *Shifts*, *Shuffles*, and *Evasions*, are in one Respect worse than the *grossest*, *downright* Bribery and Perjury; (I say in *one Respect*, for *upon the Whole* scarce any thing can be worse) inasmuch as they are so many *Hypocritcal Prevarications* with *God*, and one's *own Conscience*; which are high Aggravations of Guilt. In short; if You vote upon *any View* of *private Gain* to Yourself, or your Relations, for a Man whom You otherwise would not vote for; It is *in effect* a Bribe. You ought, in truth, to vote upon no View, but That of chusing Persons, who, You think in your own Conscience, will best serve their Country. And who, do You

You think, is most likely to do That? A Gentleman in Your Neighbourhood, with Whom You are acquainted, and know to be a Person of Virtue and Honour, and who would no more offer You a Bribe, than You ought to take one? Or a Man, who is sent down to You from *London*, with a Bag of Money, or Bank-Notes, to bribe your whole Burrough; Whose Face you never saw, and whose Name You never heard of? Or, if You please, One of whom You either know *nothing*, or of whom you know *no Good*, but rather the Contrary?

The Words *well-affected* and *disaffected* to *His Majesty*, and *his Government*, will, I suppose, according to Custom, be sounded in your Ears; as some Men's Turn is best served by either of them. I hope None will be chosen, but such as are well-affected to his Majesty, and his Government; meaning by the latter his Right and Title to the Crown: For I will never own that his Court, or his Ministry, or their Conduct and Management, is his Government. But then remember, that his best Friends are often represented as his Enemies; and so on the Contrary. However That be; pray consider that you are to chuse *Representatives* not of the *King*, nor of the *Court*, or *Ministry*, nor of the *Lords*; but of the *People*; that is of *Yourselves*.

ſelves. The Houſe of Commons is by its Inſtitution the Barrier of our Liberties againſt the Lords, and the Crown itſelf; ſhould Either of them encroach upon thoſe Liberties.

While I write this laſt, I do not forget my main Deſign; which is not ſo much the Care of your *Temporal* Intereſts, as of your *Eternal.* For Your *Souls* are deeply concerned in what I have now ſaid: Becauſe the *ultimate Deſign* of the *Oath* You are to take is to ſecure the *Rights* and *Liberties* of the *Commons* of *England.* One of the great Securities of Thoſe their Rights and Liberties (nay the chief of all) is, That the Choice of Repreſentatives to ſerve them in Parliament is veſted ſolely in *Themſelves.* But it is no otherwiſe in Themſelves, than merely *in Name*; if they chuſe their Repreſentatives by the Operation of *Bribes.* For the *Choice* is, in truth, made by Thoſe who *give* the Bribes, not Thoſe who *take* them. If ever *That* Influence *thoroughly prevails* in theſe Elections; Farewell to the Liberties of *Great-Britain.* Thoſe who ſhould be the Guardians of our Liberties in bar *to* the Court, are then prepared to be the Tools and Creatures *of* it: A *Britiſh* Senate is juſt like a *Ro-*

a *Roman* Senate, as it was under the *Emperors*: We then groan under the worst of Slavery, *Legal*, *Parliamentary*, *Constitutional* Slavery; Which, tho' the *sorest of Evils* that can be felt in *This World*, is, however, Nothing in Comparison of *Damnation* in the *World to come*.

FINIS.

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